

## COVER SHEET

**Responsible Agency:** U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), Office of Fossil Energy (FE)

**Cooperating Agencies:** U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USFS), U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

**Title:** Tucson Electric Power Company (TEP) Sahuarita–Nogales Transmission Line Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

**Location:** Pima and Santa Cruz Counties, Arizona

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**Abstract:** A DOE Presidential Permit is required before anyone can construct, connect, operate, and maintain an electric transmission line across the U.S. border. On August 17, 2000, TEP applied to DOE/FE for a Presidential Permit to construct a double-circuit 345,000 volt (345-kV) electric transmission line to transmit 500 MW of electricity. The transmission line would begin south of Tucson, Arizona, in the vicinity of Sahuarita, cross the U.S.-Mexico border near Nogales, Arizona, and continue into Mexico. TEP anticipates using 400 MW of capability for transport of energy between the United States and Mexico. The proposed transmission line would also provide a redundant path for the energy that is currently transmitted over an existing 115-kV transmission line from Tucson to Nogales. The local Nogales utility, Citizens Communications, has committed to the purchase of 100 MW of transmission capacity to allow for future load growth.

The issuance of a Presidential Permit for this project would constitute a major Federal action within the meaning of the *National Environmental Policy Act*. Because the proposed transmission line would traverse lands managed by the BLM and the USFS, both the BLM and the USFS are cooperating agencies for this EIS. Additionally, because TEP would undertake construction at the international border, concurrence from the U.S. Section, International Boundary and Water Commission is required.

Three alternative transmission line corridors (the Western Corridor, Central Corridor, and Crossover Corridor) are analyzed in this EIS, as well as the “No Action” alternative. The Notice of Availability of the Draft EIS was published by the Environmental Protection Agency in the *Federal Register* on August 22, 2003 (68 FR 50768), which initiated a minimum 45-day comment period that ended on October 14, 2003. Volume II of this EIS contains transcripts from the public hearings, copies of all comments received, and the Federal agencies’ responses. To the extent feasible, changes in the Final EIS are indicated by a double underline (for minor changes) and by a sidebar in the margin (for larger changes). The Final EIS will be used by DOE and the Federal agency officials to ensure that they have the information needed for informed decision-making. The decisions themselves will be issued subsequent to the Final EIS, in the form of a Record of Decision for each agency, or as a letter of concurrence.